Amendments to the claims:

Please cancel claim 3 and amend claims 1, 9 and 14 as shown in the following listing of claims. This listing of claims will replace all prior versions, and listings, of claims in the application.

1. (currently amended) A multi-component icon generated from characteristics of a data object where the characteristics include data object content and data object metadata, said icon comprising:

a plurality of icon portions, each having a plurality of visual variations, each icon portion being variably assignable to any one characteristic of the data object wherein each variation of the at least one characteristic is visually represented by the icon by a corresponding one visual variation of a variably assigned icon portion, the plurality of icon portions including a main body icon portion and a pair of wing icon portions, each of the wing icon portions being directly attached ~~connected~~ to the main body icon portion and protruding from the main body icon portion.

2. (original) The icon as described in Claim 1 wherein the data object is one of a word processing document file, executable files, software applications, audio files, image files, video files, and print spool queues.

3. (canceled).

4. (canceled).

5. (canceled).

6. (original) The icon as described in Claim 1 wherein the visual variations comprise at least one of variations of colors, variations of shades of colors, variations of shapes, and variations of patterns.

7. (original) The icon as described in Claim 1 wherein the visual variations have secondary visual variations.

8. (original) The icon as described in Claim 1 being interactive with other icons corresponding to other data objects so as to visually indicate similarities and differences in characteristics of the data object and the other data objects.

9. (currently amended) A method of generating a multi-component icon from characteristics of a data object where the characteristics include data object content and data object metadata, said method comprising:

providing an icon having a plurality of visual traits each having a plurality of visual variations, the plurality of visual traits including icon portions, the icon portions including a main body icon portion and a pair of wing icon portions, each of the wing icon portions being directly attached ~~connected~~ to the main body icon portion and protruding from the main body icon portion;

variably assigning any one of the visual traits to any one of the characteristics of the data object metadata such that each variation of a selected characteristic of the data object metadata is represented by a visual variation of a selected visual trait; and

displaying the icon according to the assignment of the selected visual trait to the selected characteristic.

10. (previously presented) The method of Claim 9 wherein the selected characteristic of the data object metadata is variably assigned dependent on user preference.

11. (previously presented) The method of Claim 9 wherein the selected characteristic of the data object metadata is variably assigned automatically.

12. (original) The method of Claim 9 wherein the icon is generated with a user initiated interface and variably assigning is selected through the interface.

13. (original) The method of Claim 12 wherein variably assigning is session based through the interface such that in one session a given visual trait may be assigned to a first characteristic and in a second session the given visual trait may be assigned to a second characteristic.

14. (currently amended) A method of creating a multi-component icon for each of a set of data objects from characteristics of the set of data objects, the characteristics including data object content and data object metadata, the method comprising:

determining a common characteristic of the data object metadata common to the set of data objects;

determining the number of variations associated with the common characteristic;

determining a visual trait of the multi-component icon having a corresponding number of visual variations that are greater than or equal to the number of variations of the common characteristic and assigning it to the common characteristic; and

displaying the customized icons for the set of data objects according to the assignment of the visual trait to the common characteristic, each of the customized icons including icon portions, the icon portions for each of the customized icons including a main body icon portion and a pair of wing icon portions, each of the wing icon portions being directly attached ~~connected~~ to the main body icon portion and protruding from the main body icon portion.

15. (previously presented) The method as described in Claim 14 wherein the common characteristic of the data object metadata is variably assigned dependent on user preference.

16. (previously presented) The method as described in Claim 14 wherein the common characteristic of the data object metadata is variably assigned automatically.

17. (original) The method as described in Claim 14 wherein the icon is generated with a user initiated interface and variably assigning is selected through the interface.

18. (original) The method of processing as described in Claim 17 wherein variably assigning is session based through the interface such that in one session a given visual trait may be assigned to a first characteristic and in a second session the given visual trait may be assigned to a second characteristic.

19. (original) The method of processing as described in Claim 14 wherein variably assigning is dependent on type of characteristic.

20. (previously presented) The icon of Claim 1 wherein the main body icon portion and the pair of wing icon portions are shaped to resemble components of an ornamental Venetian glass candy.

21. (previously presented) The method of Claim 9 wherein the main body icon portion and the pair of wing icon portions are shaped to resemble components of an ornamental Venetian glass candy.

22. (previously presented) The method of Claim 14 wherein the main body icon portion and the pair of wing icon portions are shaped to resemble components of an ornamental Venetian glass candy.